

REMARKS

By this amendment, claims 1, 5, and 9 have been amended. These amendments are made to even more clearly recite the claimed invention, do not add prohibited new matter and are fully supported by the specification. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office Action are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-9 and 11-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over MORRIS et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,216,144, hereinafter "MORRIS") in view of SLUTSMAN et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,177,905, hereinafter "SLUTSMAN"), and TATHAM et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,223,177, hereinafter "TATHAM") and further in view of LUZESKI et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,430,177, hereinafter "LUZESKI").

Applicants respectfully traverse and request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections.

Initially, Applicants note that the claims recite (using claim 1 as a non-limiting example):

An electronic chat joining method in which a chairman who opens an electronic conference sets an area on a database for storing chat messages, and in which guests who join said electronic chat send requests for access to said area to the database from video game terminals of the guests, the method comprising:

storing setup information for setting said area in a storage section of a chairman's video game terminal,

creating from the chairman's video game terminal an invitation message comprising said setup information stored in said storage section,

giving an instruction from the chairman's video game terminal for transmission of said invitation message,

transmitting from the chairman's video game terminal an invitation signal comprising said setup information to said guests' video game terminals based on only said instruction,

receiving at the guests' video game terminals said invitation signal and obtaining said setup information,

creating at the guests' video game terminals access request signals comprising said setup information, and

transmitting from the guests' video game terminals to said database, said access request signals solely in response to each guest's instruction,

the database area storing chat messages that are sent to and from the video game terminals,

wherein the setup information is not visible on the guests' video game terminals; and

wherein the setup information includes a password, which is communicated from the chairman's video game terminal to a server and/or the guests' video game terminals without modification, the password being used for initiating and authenticating setting the area in the storage section of the chairman's video game terminal.

The present invention relates to a method and apparatus for joining an electronic conference from a video game machine by using a simple procedure. According to an non-limiting embodiment of the invention, a player (chairman) who decides to open an electronic chat, creates a message (S201, FIG. 2) and sends the message to a Message Server 113, requesting that a chat be opened (S202, FIG. 2). In response, the Message Server 113 sends a setup signal to a Database in a group of servers to open a chat room (S203, FIG. 2), and returns a chat opening signal to the chairman (S204, FIG. 2). Having received the chat opening signal (S204, FIG. 2), the chairman may then send an enter room signal to the Database to gain access to the chat room set up in the Database (S205, FIG. 2). Then, an invitation to chat message, which is based on the earlier created message 201, is displayed on the chairman's terminal (S206, FIG. 2). An invitation signal is then transmitted to a plurality of guests based on the invitation to chat message (S207, FIG. 2). See, e.g., page 9, line 17 through page 10, lines 21 of the present specification.

One of the advantages of the present invention is a reduction in cumbersome procedures required to set up a chat by, for example, formatting the invitation signal (S207, FIG. 2) as shown in FIG. 5. That is, the chairman's terminal automatically sets a user name 501 and a user ID 502 based on information previously registered with the Message Server 113. The chairman's terminal further automatically obtains a chat name 512 and a chat password 513 from the original chat opening message (S201, FIG. 2) and a chat ID 514 from the contents of the chat opening response signal (S204, FIG. 2). This information (S207, FIG. 2) is then sent to all of the users named in the chat message 201. The chat ID 514 and chat password 513 are not displayed on the terminals of the other users, but are automatically included in a response signal from the other users that wish to join the chat.

In contrast, MORRIS discloses a system for facilitating negotiations between users over a communications network. In this regard, MORRIS discloses a communication protocol, referred to as a "Rendezvous" protocol, which allows users to make proposals and counterproposals concerning particular activities, such as, for example, an online "chat" session, an online computer game, an online purchase, etc. The protocol allows a user who receives an offer to, e.g., chat on a particular subject, to accept, modify and/or reject the terms of the offer. The protocol further allows a user to transmit messages, referred to as "Evil" messages, registering displeasure with any proposal, counterproposal, or acceptance. An Evil message has a cumulative (and potentially exponential) effect upon a recipient's ability to access the computer system's resources. The Examiner asserts that MORRIS discloses an electronic chat system.

However, the Examiner concedes that MORRIS fails to teach any of the other elements of the claimed invention.

Thus, the Examiner relies upon SLUTSMAN to teach the following aspects of the invention with regard to independent claims 1, 5 and 9: (1) storing setup information, (2) creating from the chairman's terminal an invitation message, (3) receiving invitation signals at the guests' terminals and obtaining setup information, (4) creating request signals at the guests' terminals, and (5) transmitting the access request signals from the guests' terminals to the database. However, the Examiner concedes that even if MORRIS and SLUTSMAN were to be combined, the combination of the two disclosures would be deficient in that the combination does not teach that "the setup information includes a password," as recited in the claims. The Examiner, therefore, relies on TATHAM et al. to teach that the setup information includes a password, which is communicated from the chairman's terminal to a server on the guest's video game terminals without modification (TATHAM et al., col. 5, lines 9-15 and col. 5, line 58, to col. 6, line 7).

However, the Examiner still acknowledges that even the combination of MORRIS, SLUTSMAN, and TATHAM is still deficient in that it does not teach that the setup information is not visible on the guest's video game terminal. Therefore, the Examiner relies upon a fourth publication, LUZESKI, to teach this feature (LUZESKI, col. 7, lines 40-43).

This admitted need to rely upon four references clearly indicates that the Examiner has used Applicants' claims as a map or blue print for selecting isolated features from this prior art, rather than logical reasoning. Furthermore, upon review of

TATHAM, Applicants submit that TATHAM merely teaches that the “details of the web-site may be sent in the form an e-mail message...with the address of the dedicated site, an invitation to join the workgroup, and, if applicable, a password required for gaining access to the site” (TATHAM et al., col. 5, lines 9-15). However, claimed password is “used for initiating and authenticating setting the area in the storage section of the chairman’s video game terminal,” as recited in independent claims 1, 5, and 9. In contrast, TATHAM merely discloses a password, and does not teach setup information, as described in the claimed invention. Accordingly, the password in TATHAM does not function in the same manner as the claimed password. For at least this reason, Applicants submit that the cited publications (alone or in combination) do not teach all of the elements of the claimed invention, and respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

As for LUZESKI, this document discloses a system that allows access to voice, fax, or e-mail message services via a web browser interface (LUZESKI, col. 7, lines 30-33), and does not cure the aforementioned deficiencies of MORRIS, SLUTSMAN, and TATHAM because the session IDs and password in LUZESKI fail to perform the same function as the claimed password (i.e., “initiating and authenticating setting the area in the storage section of the chairman’s video game terminal,” as recited in the claims). Based on the teachings of the cited publications, Applicants submit that one skilled in the art would not have reasons or guidance to modify the teachings of LUZESKI (or the other cited publications) to arrive at the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the cited publications fail to disclose or render obvious yet another element of the claimed invention.

Therefore, Applicants submit that independent claims 1, 5, and 9 (and claims dependent therefrom) are not rendered obvious by the cited publications, and respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections, and an indication of the allowability of all claims pending in the present application in due course. Applicants further submit that dependent claims 2-4, 6-9, and 10-19 are allowable for at least the same reasons applicable to independent claims 1, 5, and 9, and additionally, for the specific features recited in each dependent claim.


CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

If any extension of time is deemed to be necessary to maintain the pendency of the application, including any extension of time fees for entry of an Examiner's Amendment, the Patent and Trademark Office is hereby requested and authorization is hereby provided to charge any necessary fees to maintain the pendency of this application to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully Submitted,  
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